



SEQUOIA & KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

& SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST/GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL MONUMENT

SUMMER 2009 GUIDE



Crystal Cave Tours / Free Activities • page 3
Road & Safety Tips / Finding Gasoline • page 5
Highlights & Shuttle in Sequoia Park • page 6
Highlights in Kings Canyon & USFS • page 7

page 8 • Facilities & Ranger Programs in Sequoia
page 9 • Facilities & Programs in Kings Canyon & USFS
page 10 • Camping & Lodging / Bears & Your Food
page 12 • Park Road Map



Finally forever wild

What would be the best use for gorgeous slopes and lake basins ringing a beautiful sub-alpine valley in the southern Sierra Nevada?

Debates over how to use public land are common to this country's history. In this case, the area in question is Mineral King, and the history of its potential uses is a long one.

Let's start back in 1873, when one James Crabtree dreamed a dream of riches. In that vision, an Indian chief led him to a place where he should establish a mine. The resulting White Chief Mine soon inspired a rush of silver seekers and the name "Mineral King."

Yet the land yielded nothing in the way of mineral wealth. The name stuck anyway, but it was rich scenery and cool mountain air that continued to draw people after the mines went bust.

Fast forward to 1926. An expansion of Sequoia National Park excluded Mineral King due to the old jumble of mining claims. Instead, it became the "Sequoia Game Refuge," overseen by the U.S. Forest Service. People increasingly sought it out for recreation, idyllic scenery, and mild summer temperatures, and for the lovely lake basins to be explored.

Twenty years later, commercial downhill skiing became an option. Should the rocky basins and valley of Mineral King



Looking across Mineral King Valley from one of the Mosquito Lakes, now protected in the John Krebs Wilderness. Photo @Rick Cain

Valley be transformed with lifts and lodges? Could wealth be wrested from the area this way, rather than by mining?

This on-and-off debate continued until a serious proposal made it to the national stage in 1965, a plan that included 14 ski lifts, two hotels, and a parking garage. People questioned the proposal. Should large roads be blasted through the national park to serve this non-park area? Could ski facilities survive the frequent avalanches that keep this area unusually free of forest?

A national discussion in the courts and public airwaves went on for a decade. It came to an

abrupt end when one congressman stood up for preserving Mineral King. Fresno's John Krebs sponsored a bill to add Mineral King to Sequoia National Park. Despite many local objections, the nation agreed with him, and the bill passed.

Still, talk over this area's future did not end. This spring, the name "Mineral King" was again before Congress. Again the discussion involved what its best and highest use might be.

Once again the American people made a decision through their representatives, this time choosing the highest form of preservation for America's public lands — wilderness designation. Named for the man who rose to defend Mineral King 40 years ago, the John Krebs Wilderness now protects its beauty, habitat, and wild experiences for generations to come.